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Omar Ali Al-Smadi, Radzuwan Ab Rashid

In-Text Citation: (Al-Smadi & Rashid, 2017)
To Cite this Article: Al-Smadi, O. A., & Rashid, R. A. (2017). A Theoretical Review of Classroom Discourse. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *6*(3), 129–138.

A Theoretical Review of Classroom Discourse

Omar Ali Al-Smadi, Radzuwan Ab Rashid

Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21030 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia.
Corresponding Author Email: radzuwanrashid@unisza.edu.my

Abstract
This paper reviews the characteristics of classroom discourse and interactional routines in an adult classroom. Classroom discourse differs in functions and forms from language used in other contexts as teachers and students have specific goals and engage in different sets of activities in the classroom. Student learning is influenced by their ability to negotiate meaning and work together in completing the given tasks. The successful negotiation of meaning suggests that learning has taken place. On the other hand, teacher talk also influences the student learning. Teachers in classroom modify and simplify their talk to suit their objectives and effectively engage students with different levels of proficiency. This paper concludes that an effective classroom discourse involves successful negotiation of meanings not only between teacher and student(s) but also between student(s) and students(s).
Keywords: Classroom Discourse, Classroom Interaction, Negotiation of Meaning, Teacher Talk, Teacher-Student Interaction, Student-Student Interaction

Introduction
Classroom discourse describes what happens in classroom. It is a form of discourse which falls within language classrooms specifically verbal routines in classroom (Behnam & Pouriran, 2009). Classroom discourse includes features, such as modes of interactions, teacher talk, and unequal power relations. Classroom discourse, according to Clark and Clark (2008), is an intricate sociocultural process that involves techniques of meaning construction in the development of students' social identities.

Teachers in classroom have a dominant role as they control the learning objectives, styles and activities. This role of teachers affects short and/or long-term learning of students (Kurhila, 2004). Therefore, it is of major importance to consider the role and communication of teachers in classroom. Teachers' talk and roles are attached to classroom discourse as teachers modify and adjust functions and forms of language to enhance interactions and communications in classroom (Ellis, 2008). Teacher talk is going to be discussed further in Section 2.0.

Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model of classroom discourse integrates discourse elements involving hierarchical layers, each layer consists of units from preceding layer: "Lesson-Transaction-Exchange-Move-Act" (p. 21). The main discourse element is lesson, whereas act is

the slightest element. Discourse functions of act includes evaluation, cue and elicitation. Within exchange layer, Sinclair and Coulthard notice the following interactional features: the sequence of question and answer, responding to tutor instructions by students' and listening to tutor's instruction. The sequence of question and answer suggests Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model: initiation by teacher, response by student and feedback by teacher.

The IRF model is believed to be dominant in classroom discourses (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Teachers have the big portion of classroom interactional talk. According to Behtash and Azarnia (2015) teacher dominates 75% of talk within classroom. Repetition among teacher talk and integration of IRF sequence give the teacher the biggest portion of classroom talk as the IRF model suggests teacher talk in initiation and feedback stages. Szendroi (2010) conducted a study within ESP context, concluding that 71% of talk in classroom is carried out by teacher. Regardless of generality about IRF model, several disagreements were established. For example, Walsh (2006b), claimed that in students-based classroom "there is more equality and partnership" also "more formal, ritualized interactions between teachers and students are not as prevalent" (p.47). According to Lee (2007), the third component of IRF model is not feedback all the time, it is rather conditional to former act and therefore "a situated accomplishment" which reflects preceding act (p.202). In this regard, Nassaji and Wells (2000) identified six undertakings of the third component of IRF model: "metatalk, comment, justification, action, evaluation and clarification" (p.7) in addition to subdivisions associated with them.

Teacher talk and classroom interaction are important factors in classroom discourse. These topics are going to be discussed further in the sections that follow.

Teacher Talk

Teacher talk is the main source of learner information and the key for controlling class and students' behavior (Guo et al., 2010). Also, teacher talk is the crucial chunk of teaching a language. It is a special language used by teachers when talking to class members within educational setting. Also, it is the source of language input and it has direct inspiration on outcomes (ibid).

Teachers in classrooms may address whole class participants as an application of IRF model, teachers may also speak to an individual student for leading less guided exercises and finally speaking to members of a group for organizing acts and evoking self -initiated language and collaboration (Rashid, 2016). It is believed that teacher talk is not only important in managing classrooms, it is also of major importance in the processes of learning. Within the course of teaching, teachers usually clarify and make their talk simpler by slowing pace of their talk, speaking louder than usual, using simple words and rules and repeating certain themes. According to Brown (2001), teacher talk in classroom bears direct and indirect impacts on students. Indirect impact is present through means by which teacher encouraging and praising students, using ideas of students, repeating students' words, telling jokes and asking questions. On the other hand, direct impact is present through presenting new ideas and discourses, correcting without rejecting, offering guidance and giving directions. Shim (2007) puts forth that questioning, offering feedback and eliciting are the most common characteristics of teacher talk.

Teacher talk in classroom demonstrates certain adjustments to suit objectives and effectively involving participants, such as exaggerating pronunciation, repeating self, pausing,

low subordination degree and using statements and declaratives more frequently than questions. Xuewen (2006) categorizes such modifications in teacher talk to the following categories: firstly, at phonological level, modifications include: slow delivery rate, intonation is exaggerated, contraction is avoided, special noun's stresses, more pauses and stress, and releasing final stops. Secondly, at syntactic level, modifications include: repetition, more questions especially yes-no questions and infrequent wh-questions, well-formed utterances, reduced complex utterances, preference to present tense and use of canonical words order. Thirdly, at semantic level, modification includes: nouns are preferred in comparison with reference pronouns, frequent use of nouns and verbs, infrequent use of idiomatic expressions and employment of concrete over dummy verbs like *do*. Such linguistic modifications are also acknowledged by (Ferguson, 1971; Henzl, 1979; Long, 1983; Kelch, 1985).

Teacher talk plays an important role in classroom interaction. Teachers initiate, guide, monitor and feedback interaction among participants. Aspects of classroom interaction are going to be discussed in the section that follows.

Classroom Interaction

Interaction in classroom is a practice which fosters the advancement of learners' listening and speaking abilities. The interaction process encompasses two parties. So, it is not only one-party practice, rather two or more members sending and receiving utterances to establish a communication practice. Classroom interaction is a "social process of meaning-making and interpreting, and the educational value of interaction grows out of developing and elaborating interaction as a social process" (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009, p. 39). It is proven in literature that classroom interaction is fluid and dynamic (Seedhouse, 2011). Classroom talk and interaction are "the collection and representation of socio-interactional practices that portray the emergence of teaching and learning of a new language through teachers' and students' co-construction of understanding and knowledge in and through the use of language-in-interaction" (Sert, 2015, p. 9).

Classroom interaction, according to Allwright and Bailey (1991), furnishes "input, practice opportunities, and receptivity" (p.25). Therefore, it is significant to learning and teaching. Teachers should be flexible and allowing possibilities of student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions. Also, the teachers should not have a dominant role in class, they should actively engage student in classroom interaction (River, 1987).

Classroom interactions offer students chances to integrate target language structure/s to talk they produce. Interactions awaken students' instinct to respond and participate in interactions whether or not proficiency is necessary for tasks or activities being negotiated. Therefore, the success of any event in classroom is highly dependent on construction of communication between and among teacher and student (Daniels, 2001).

Wellington and Osborn (2001) mark language in classroom as most important and has many roles, such as aesthetic, mental, educational and communicative. Language plays an important role in verbal class interactions as well as allowing students to think, reason and negotiate classroom content. Language boosts exchanges of talk and advances learners' competencies and performance. According to Walsh (2006b) interactions are "context shaped and context renewing" (p.50). In other words, participants in interaction depend on context and

remodeling of context for invoking their identities and actions. Also, context here is considered "a product and a project of participants' actions" (Heritage, 2004, p.224).

Classroom social interaction according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) takes place between teacher and student and vice versa also among students themselves. Interaction actively engages students to comprehend and interpret fellow students. Students in interaction not only perform, but also analyze happenings in classroom activities and practices. In the following subsections, I will discuss types of classroom interactions, teacher – student(s) interaction and student(s) – student(s) interaction, in particular.

Teacher- Student(s) Interaction

Teacher- student(s) interaction occurs when the teacher talks with one or more students. The teacher negotiates content with students, asking questions, using pupil's thoughts, giving directions, lecturing, correcting or explaining talk made by the students. Students in this regard can imitate teacher on how well to practice interaction and negotiation effectively (Khadidja, 2010).

In interacting with students, teachers should concentrate on type of language which students can comprehend i.e. output should address all students' levels and must be understood. Also, teachers should plan in advance what they are going to say since this language serves as a resource to students. Moreover, teachers need to be careful about the way they speak, for example, tone, speed, intonation and voice. Furthermore, teachers should choose interesting topics for talks and discussion as they serve initiation for elicitation (Khadidja, 2010). Acknowledging this, the role of teacher in classroom interaction is directly connected to students' output development.

Similar to the teacher – student(s) interactions, student(s) – student(s) interactions have a significant role in the development of classroom interactions as well as language development. Student(s) – student(s) interaction in classroom is going to be discussed in the following subsection.

Student(s) – Student(s) Interaction

Interaction among and between students is another form of classroom interaction. Such interactions are noticed in classroom as students share notes, ideas and gratefulness. Interaction among students actively construct skills and knowledge (Scrivener, 2005). Social relationships among participants will also be established in course of interaction. Therefore, teachers should hearten active participation in classroom interactional practices. Student interaction is "a powerful way to reinforce what have been learned" (Naegle, 2002, p.128). Student(s) – student(s) interaction arises in peer interaction or group interaction in order to exercise language input and getting feedback when they correct one another or when they ask questions (Mackey, 2007). According to Lynch (1996) "group work is more likely to lead to negotiation of meaning than interaction with the teacher" (p. 111). Group work in this sense allows feedback to arise from students as they correct and feedback one another.

Student interactions improve development of classroom inclusiveness, for example, enabling and nurturing quiet and or shy students to take more part in classroom interaction (Suhaili and Haywood, 2017). In interacting with fellows, such students usually experience little

amount of pressure in participation and they are usually more contented "learners who will establish social relationship through this kind of interaction, where the sense of learning community is promoted and isolation is reduced in the classroom" (Khadidja, 2010, p.16). Accordingly, facilitating interactions among participants represents effectiveness for promoting learner character in students, and promoting learning responsibilities through taking active part in learning processes.

Teacher- student(s) interactions as well as student(s) – student(s) interactions are both vital in EFL classroom. Students' and teachers' interactions within classroom are necessary for promoting eloquent interactions. The process in which students interact and negotiate comprehension with one another is referred to as negation of meaning which is going to be discussed in the following section.

Negotiation of Meaning: An Aspects of Classroom Interaction
Interaction in classroom brings in the concept of negotiation of meaning which entails positive learning resulted from interactions. Negotiation of meaning refers to interactional practices which arises within two or more participants working with each other to establish a bi-directional comprehension of certain utterance. During negotiation of meaning a receiver demands a clarification or a confirmation of certain utterance, and the utterer replies to the request by simplifying, elaborating or repeating the utterance. Negotiating meaning usually involves certain discourse stratagems, such as clarifying a request, confirming understanding, repeating, recast or restating (Pica, 1994; Pasfield & Neofitou, 2014). These conversational moves are important in developing learning. Long (1996) describes three conversational components of negotiation of meaning: "input modification" such as stressing certain word, "semantically contingent responses" such as repeating certain word/s, and "conversational modification" such as clarifying or confirming (p.434). Studies on students' interaction emphasize interactive discourse among participants where negotiation of meaning is considered vital. Students' linguistic output should be made straightforward to class, therefore other students can participate in interaction. In case comprehension is lost, several adjustment processes can be employed to straighten out interaction, such as simplification and accommodation.

Negotiation of meaning is vital to foreign and second language development as negotiation encourages understanding and positive interaction among students (Blake, 2000; Abbuhl, 2011). Negotiation of meaning embraces precision, accuracy and inspiring self-repair (Smith, 2003a). Therefore, opportunities must be granted to students in classroom for interacting, asking questions, asking for and giving feedback and speaking their mind. Students in classroom should negotiate, state and interpret ongoing meaning in classroom (Derakhshan et al., 2015). According to Oradee (2012) teachers should design interactive environment for learning where students have the chances to use language and interactionally negotiate meaning. Students must be made active partakers in process of constructing meaning and interaction within class as it results in development of language. Also, performance among language learners is not only directed to proficiency, but also to regularity of negotiation practices that the students involved in. Negotiation of meaning advances students' output to higher levels (Sommat, 2007).

Bitchener (2004) highlights that in students' negotiation of meaning, students adjust around 66% of their troublesome exchanges, such positive adjustment is an indicator that learning has taken place. Within students' interaction, retentiveness of adjustments shows that negotiation of meaning has occurred and negotiation of meaning contributes to language learning. Bitchener further emphasizes that recast is connected to negotiation of meaning. The importance of recast is that it provides disciplinary linguistic structures to students and has no undesirable excessive effect on communicative flow of certain tasks. Interactions embracing recast are more useful and advantageous than those in which recast is absence (Leeman, 2003).

Varonis and Gass (1985b) formulated a model which reveals the role of negotiation of meaning in unfolding discourse structure. In their model, when a breakdown in comprehension arises, speakers are possibly engaged in a set of exchanges aiming to resolve non-understanding within dialogue. In their model, negotiation practices involve triggers and resolutions. Trigger is the receiver's non-understanding utterance. While resolution involve an indicator which indicates unclearness and a response that answer invitation to clarity. This model to negotiation practices shows linguistic resources are employed by students to acknowledge misunderstanding and resolve breakdowns in communications. This model helps finding regularity of negotiation of meaning practices which occurs in conversations. This model has been used recently in technological enhanced situations, such as video calls interactions (Yanguas, 2010; Monteiro, 2014; Van der Zwaard, 2017).

In discussing negotiation of meaning, Krashen's input hypothesis, Long's interactional hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis serves as a theoretical framework for describing and explaining negotiation of meaning. The input hypothesis by Krashen (1985) argues that reading and listening (language input) is important in language learning and development and that speaking and writing fluency will indeed be ensured after students construct adequate competence in language input. Comprehensive input is approved to be crucial however not enough to promote language acquisition, the output indeed initiates students noticing breaks between target language and interlanguage they produce (Swain, 1995). The output hypothesis by Swain (1995) on the other hand claims that language input is important in learning but insufficient, language production triggers students to pay attention to linguistic forms for expressing projected meaning and solving any linguistic deficits in a proper way at any certain context.

The interaction hypothesis by Long (1996) suggests that interactional practices focalizes on negotiation of meaning. The regularity of certain occurrences in target form produces input adjustments and adverse evaluation for increasing content expectedness and clarity. Such processes encourage observing innovative forms, breaks in interlanguage, divergence between output and input and connections of innovative forms of meaning. Interactions according to Long enhance understanding, negotiation of meaning and mastery of semantically conditional talk. Role play, class participation, group and pair work, teacher and student talks are among the tasks and activities which excite classroom interaction for negotiating meaning.

Conclusion

Classroom interaction drives teaching and learning processes, it involves teacher-student(s) interaction and student(s)-student(s) interaction. Group and pair activities are useful for

negotiation of meaning. Such activities give students active part in classroom interactive discourse, for example, initiating, responding to and ending dialogues. Interactions in second or foreign language classroom control opportunities of learning which students receive. Both students and teachers contribute to the management of classroom interaction as well as management of opportunities to learn.

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